



2019

YEAR IN REVIEW

CASEWORK REPORT

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WHAT WE DO



I am so proud to represent Washington's 7th Congressional District. This region is a model for our state and nation, with its bold, progressive ideals and the partnerships and coalitions we've built.

Serving my constituents is the most crucial part of the work that I do in Congress. My caseworkers in our Seattle office help constituents with problems or requests they may have with federal agencies. The 2019 casework report highlights stories of some of the constituents my office has helped.

We have helped more than 1,107 constituents in the 7th Congressional District since taking office three years ago, saving or putting back in their pockets a total of \$3,890,656.

Our caseworkers handle Social Security problems, federal disability filings, Internal Revenue Service difficulties, immigration issues, tuition problems, veterans' benefits, and assist constituents with visas, citizenship and employment.

We work with the appropriate federal agencies to resolve these issues. Our inquiries help to expedite and provide additional insight into ongoing cases that constituents have with federal agencies. Members of Congress cannot force an agency to expedite a case or act preferentially, nor can they assist individuals in judicial matters, provide legal advice, or recommend an attorney. We can, however, facilitate the administrative processes, cut through red tape and advocate for a favorable outcome.

Constituents in need of assistance are encouraged to contact my Seattle office by calling 206-674-0040 or contacting us at jayapal.casework@mail.house.gov. You can also visit my website's services page. This report includes just some of the stories from constituents my staff and I have been fortunate to work with and help this year. In the following testimonials, some pseudonyms are used to protect privacy. It is an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal

HUMAN RIGHTS

KEXU LAN

Representative Jayapal and her district office began working with her constituent, Kexu Lan, in 2017 to secure the release of her son, Xiyue Wang, from Evin Prison in Tehran, Iran. Wang, a University of Washington alumnus and current Princeton Ph.D. student, traveled to Iran in May of 2016 to conduct dissertation research. Xiyue was seeking unclassified documents unrelated to contemporary politics and was not engaged in any political activities. In August of that year, Xiyue was arrested and wrongly convicted of two counts of espionage. He was sentenced to ten years in prison.

Representative Jayapal worked closely with Kexu and her lawyer, serving as a liaison between The Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs and Kexu. The Representative's staff spoke at local rallies in support of his release, wrote a letter to President Trump asking him to prioritize Xiyue's release with eight other members of the Washington State congressional delegation, and co-sponsored a House Resolution calling for the unconditional release of all U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents being held in Iran. On December 6th, the Department of State contacted Representative Jayapal to inform her that that had secured Xiyue's release in a prisoner swap.

Kexu never gave up on her son throughout the two years that she worked with Representative Jayapal's office; she demonstrated incredible resolve and perseverance in her fight to ensure her son's release. At a December 2019 town hall following Xiyue's release, Representative Jayapal said, "It is a powerful reminder of a parent's love and persistence – and it's why I take this position and platform so seriously."

IMMIGRATION

RAD CYRUS

Rad Cyrus immigrated to Shoreline from Iran to work in the technology industry. He married his wife, Samira Mohammadkani, in 2015 and subsequently applied for a spousal visa. They received notice that their interview date would be in 2017, and then President Trump issued the first iteration of his Muslim Ban. Their interview was scheduled for two weeks after the announcement. They were told that they would have to wait two to three months for the adjudication process, but they were left in a limbo of administrative processing and a waiver review for four years.

Representative Jayapal worked with Rad for three years, consistently submitting inquiries and pressuring the State Department to prioritize his case. Samira's visa was finally approved in September and the couple are now reunited at their home in Shoreline.

Their story was featured twice in *The Seattle Times*.

SEATTLE RESIDENT

U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) denied a Seattle resident's H1-B visa extension application after a request for additional evidence. Her employer was sponsoring her H1-B extension and she had an approved petition to apply for permanent residency in the United States. USCIS denied her H1-B extension due to her inability to prove that she met the requirements they considered to be equivalent to a completion of a U.S. Bachelor's degree or higher in her specialty. She had received her MBA from a prestigious American university, worked at Amazon since 2016, and had over six years of experience in her field. She was told that she had one week to depart from the U.S. and to leave behind her career, home and partner in Seattle.

Representative Jayapal supported her appeal and reapplication process with a letter of consideration and communication with the USCIS California Service Center. Her case was finally approved in October. She was able to return to the U.S. in November and continues her career and life in Seattle.

SOCIAL SECURITY

A constituent living with multiple disabilities, including epilepsy, a brain injury, and post traumatic stress disorder was cut off from the Social Security Disability Income that she relied upon without explanation. The denial letters claimed that she had not submitted her pay slips, even though she had. The constituent made many rounds of frustrating calls and in-person visits to several government offices to resolve the issue, to no avail. She walked into Representative Jayapal's district office and was able to get reinstated on the disability payments she needed.

"This experience has been frightening, threatening, and has also exasperated my disabilities which negatively affects my health and ability to function. I am very grateful for the help of the Seattle office of Congressmember Pramila Jayapal in assisting me with being re-instated on SSDI, after the Social Administration cut me off due to their own error." — Constituent

HEALTH CARE

Chanel, a 28-year-old constituent, was laid off from her job and trying to manage an autoimmune disease requiring expensive feeding tube supplies at the same time. Unfortunately, there was a gap between when her former employers' insurance ended and when she could begin receiving health care through Medicare and Disability payment through her local Social Security Office.

Our office was able to help by expediting requests to these offices and was able to swiftly secure the aid that had been promised to her so she could afford life-sustaining treatments.

"With the impending loss of my former employers' insurance, and the lag during my Medicare reinstatement, I would've been left without my life-sustaining treatments and feeding tube supplies. Within 24 hours, Representative Jayapal and her dedicated team resolved the issues I was unsuccessful in resolving after months of fervent phone calls, letters, and visits to my local Social Security Office. The Congresswoman and her team went above and beyond to ensure a member of their community received the basic human right of health care." — Chanel

VETERANS

A single father contacted Representative Jayapal's office for assistance with his \$280 disability payment from the Department of Veteran's Affairs. He uses the payment to cover basic needs as well as his child's school supplies. He was never compensated when he was due to receive the check in February of 2019. Representative Jayapal made an inquiry in September to the Department of Veteran's Affairs. He received this back pay later that month.

BUSINESS

Louie is an entrepreneur with a successful media business currently operating mostly out of Dallas. However, he has plans to bring his business back home to Washington state. Within days of contacting Representative Jayapal, he secured a \$2.2 million Small Business Administration credit to help him expand his business.

"Without your office's direct involvement, the funding process could have been delayed for several months; and would have negatively impacted the launch of our media network. I am grateful that you and your staff took the time to advocate for me and my company, which resulted in a successful outcome. Thank you again for your prompt and effective assistance." — Louie